



particulars 3

Tom Corrado

again, for you . . .

*Do thou stand for my father, and examine me
on the particulars of my life.*

William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I, Act II, Scene 4*

But there was more to it than the translation
skirting the main event
while asking the resident Sphinx
the passcode to some inner chamber
where alternatives are kept on ice
with Facebookers posting the past
despite the plethora of contemporary adaptations
of your take on *Beowulf* . . . those damaged
destined to repeat their obsessions
tumbling head over heels into roundabouts . . .
A treatise on the importance
of getting your house in order
targets hoarders making the mess messier . . .
This longing for one last shot at immortality . . .
a day in the life of a day in the life . . .
everything volumizing a high wire act
with no less than how to get through the day . . .
The vigilance you signed up for, yes? . . .
Can you imagine this ancient hatch? . . .
This escapade of hopscotch
fueling the voices in the air
that today argue happenstance . . .
the lone and level sands stretching
to a wooden-legged captain
awaiting a white whale? . . .
An afternoon class in Classics
changes the way you approach texts
while the gravel trail bloats big cats on fat bikes
waiting to find out what it all means

beginning with *Shall we begin?*
as we begin Frances O'Connor's *Emily*
with more *isms* to latch onto
sprung from the sibs' paracosms
to embellish the autofictions of those
in the boarded-up storefronts of no-no
disputing the biopic tag
with sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll
and a downplay of collaboration
ignoring Emily's *diary paper* . . .
And behind the embellishments,
The facts in the case of . . .
You walk the walk for more words
using the *Index of First Lines*
to guide your googling only to return
cache full of purple waywardisms
as if you had trod the moors . . .
Then on to the myth hands in pockets
parlaying passcodes at transfer stations
to level the playing field
for Odysseyites bused to the soundstage . . .
Again, asking yourself in the mirror
What good would questions do? . . .
the silence between extremes
leaving the madness of March
with index finger pointing to ring finger . . .
You buy time . . . walking through replays
that slam dunk you awake
in the middle of yet another dream

of being called out for texting plagiarisms . . .
You're thinking of taking the day off . . .
wanting to call in sick
when sick has nothing to do with it . . .
besides there's no one to call in to . . .
You should know this by now . . .
You should know that the gallerist
reviewing your work has run out of excuses
trying to make something to find out
what it means to make something . . .
You're grappling so as not to forget what you want
to remember . . . a whoosh as if the surf
crashes the cliff with you floating above . . .
You have decided to practice narrowing
your focus to eliminate the superfluous
from your walks . . . the day, deftly unraveling,
seems almost to disappear . . . so many thoughts
vying for your attention . . . then this idea
of the texture of it all . . . everything everyone
seemingly connected with tabs
for those nestled in the cleft of your memory . . .
You recount how touch initiates the sense of I . . .
how it costumes the body on misty mornings
and waits at the bus stop for passengers\to
resume their lives . . .
A text email breaks the silence . . .
The number of people passing through
the portal increases . . .
And so it begins . . . parsing the engagement

with you in the soup aisle at the supermarket
swiping your phone for texts,
checking the message
you took great care to get just right,
elbowing through inundations amid
the wearisome floundering of the spinning orb,
harvesting the future for meaning while standing
at the edge of a cliff for however long . . .
You leave the gallery and long-limbed bronzes
which is OK since it's being streamed
with gaps for reconciliation
by people filing in . . . as what? . . .
let's call them *inadvertents* . . .
visiting the exhibition retrospectively,
following Zoomed corridors
through an opening in the text
and into the next scene
of customers at a counter in a diner
rewritten while obsessing the commonplace
with thoughts of odysseyites
going round and round the roundabout
in your old neighborhood
resonating with the rhythmic beat
of a blacksmith's hammer on an anvil
shaping steel red-hot from the fire
as if it were planned . . .
as if it were the answer to the blue question
glued to the ATM . . . empty, unused
on a one-way street

informing each and every touch of the day . . .
You present with symptoms of naivete . . .
A late-night phone call . . . texts . . .
an early-morning phone call
and, voila, you're seduced
by the immediacy of the overheard conversation
the immersive apparatus engaged
knocking the corners off the foundation . . .
But . . . But . . . But . . .
But what? . . .
But the symmetry is off . . .
Irrelevant . . . at this late date . . . But why
should the party of the first part party? . . .
A minimum of two, or three, or five? . . .
You're kidding, yes? . . .
Perhaps not . . . Perhaps the disingenuous
are hardwired for tolerance
or at least stick-to-itiveness . . .
Regardless, take a hike . . .
The evergreens, frosted, await your passing . . .
You tried to placate some with your whimsicality
but words bottlenecked
and you were left holding empty seats . . .
The sun did come out tomorrow but went back in
the *Do Not Disturb* saying more
than you needed to know . . .
And now you're weeding? . . .
Yes, therapeutic . . .
How you can't believe how you feel . . .

How you are bound to get hurt
in the penultimate scene
surrounded by butterfly bushes . . .
You run down the hill and let go of the note . . .
They will never see it . . .
Docents clutter the walkway
with empty pizza boxes . . .
Killing the dreamscape seems
the only level-headed thing to do
and you pride yourself
on your level-headedness and pragmatism . . .
At night, cynical about your feelings
you check your messages
and the secrets strangers have failed
to pry open . . .
Room to room to room . . .
Why go there? . . .
Think of the momentum of this 18-wheeler
when you hit the brakes . . .
Translate the next chapter . . .
Don't be put off by Sanskrit . . .
It's only language, one, in fact,
that encompasses immense musicality . . .
Your earbuds will be prancing along
as happy as the summer fly
before Blake's thoughtless hand . . .
You drag your old apartment through the mud
imagining the surplus of regrets
segmenting the days

reaching back to capture the elements of then
fragmented into painful shards . . .
Odysseyites at the foot of your bed
await direction . . . again overwhelmed
by the onlookers brought in
to witness your de-accessioning . . .
The wood stove crackles its befuddlement . . .
It has been cued, as have others,
from childhood memories . . .
This is happening as predicted
choreographed by backers as a concession
to the chamber group whose notes
have taken to the air . . .
Sneaker-shopping in a pop-up
with its inevitable contact
and inevitable uncoupling
allows you to pass through a portal
without knowing where or why
without clicking *Agree*
without committing to the restraining order
of the unannounced . . .
Words squeeze into thought bubbles . . .
The spooky genius in you hazarding extinction
graffitis delusions in water closets
with images of Banksy's *Dismaland*
that take on a life of their own . . .
You worry the envelope being pushed . . .
the takeaway being taken away . . .
Does the alternative,

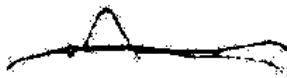
strewn with spirals of trashed autofictions
in corrosive landfills appeal to you? . . .
Why bother you ask? . . . No idea? . . .
The rehearsal to get it right, alone,
without collaboration,
is about to begin and may be enough, you think,
to confess to, again and again and again . . .
You run into your mirror image
in a parking lot . . .
Words tumble out, collide . . .
Screens refresh, avalanche . . .
The pain of updates . . .
Later you escape to Netflix,
before descending into a maelstrom . . .
Again, you review what's happened . . .
What's happening . . .
Too much at stake? . . .
You had trouble last time, yes? . . .
Let's not kid ourselves . . .
Why put yourself through this? . . .
Why go there? . . .
The honesty? . . . The openness? . . .
The honesty of openness? . . .
Surely, you can conjure a better reason . . .
Something more palatable with . . .
With what? . . . The heart as lonely hunter? . . .
Intellectualizing Chekhov's Uncle Vanya doesn't help
though Cate Blanchett gives you a second wind
and a cheatsheet on the symbolism . . .

You have stopped taking notes as suggested . . .
We're all visitors here, anyway, yes? . . .
Passing through, so to speak? . . .
Isn't that part of the agreement? . . .
part of the understanding
of the elements of style? . . .
the elements of the mundane? . . .
Retractions? . . . Forget it,
crows have eaten the bread crumbs . . .
When was the last time you saw them? . . .
Before or after the pratfall? . . .
And now so much to discover . . .
so much to rethink . . .
The train leaving the station,
passengers waving to their delicate lives
on the platform, their delicate lives . . .
brief and undeniable . . .
You've test-driven the tops and bottoms
weighed the pros and cons
put in for a hiatus from drifting aimlessly,
a far cry from the old days
when you were a pronoun-in-training, and
domesticity was a bargain-basement
forget-me-not . . .
The boatman awaits . . .
Let's talk about your future
and the hellish commute to motherhood,
fatherhood, sisterhood, brotherhood . . .
Mourning inconclusively is a no-no . . .

Learn the lines of your face . . .

Learn them well . . .

As resident cartographer of your double life,
you are within X years of enlightenment . . .



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tjc123@midtel.net

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